

4. STOMACH CONTENTS OF A COMMON PALM CIVET, *PARADOXURUS HERMAPHRODITUS* (PALLAS)

The following account retrieved from my diary, on 31st March 1979, when I was residing at Tikerpada beside the River Mahanadi, within the Satkoshia Gorge Sanctuary, Orissa provides first hand information on the feeding habit of the common palm civet, *Paradoxurus hermaphroditus* in the wild.

At 6.00 in the morning two civets, thought to be a courting pair, were noticed near our Gharial Yearling enclosure. Dwitikrishna, Iswara and Ajai (staff of the project) were able to corner one of these and catch it with a towel. When I was called to see the catch, it was struggling hard to escape from captivity in a cage (40 × 40 × 40 cm over a stand of 30 cm high). I decided to offer it an escape, if it could manage from the partially open-roofed enclosure of the muggers (*Crocodylus palustris*), or serve as food to them as they have been forced to be predominantly fish-eaters.

In the afternoon when I saw M1 (the large male mugger) was still unsuccessfully trying to open the civet and eat it, I decided to skin his kill and offer him the meat. Although the civet was dead because of me, I do not regret since it provided good information to guide in the future.

The civet was a male with a total body length 120 cm (snout-vent length 74 cm, tail 46 cm), maximum girth 20 cm and weight (after five hours of kill but without visible sign of decomposition) 2.950 kg, producing meat and bone of 2.150 kg.

The stomach contained the following: (1) Seeds of 'Kendu' fruits (*Diospyros melanoxylon*): 7 nos. (from at least two fruits); (2) some fleshy white root: 3 pieces, each app. 1 cm cube; (3) *Eublepharis hardwickii*

(gecko): 1 no., 5 cm long; (4) portions of 2 scorpions, 15 cm and 8 cm long; (5) centipedes: 2 nos. (portions of a small and a large specimen); (6) Viper snake: 1 no., 40 cm TBL, 36 cm SV; (7) *Typhlops*: 3 nos., 14.5, 7.5 and 7.0 cm length; and (8) cockroach: 1 no., complete wings and only portions of abdomen exoskeleton found.

The intestine was without digested food. In the distal parts it was partially filled with excreta with portions of a tape worm. The pancreas indicated some nematode infection.

Discussion: Civet attacks on domestic hens are commonly reported in villages and city suburbs. Their liking for palm toddy, is reflected in the common name 'Toddy cat'.

Food offered to civets in zoos constitute a mixed vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet. Dobroruka (1978) states that one cub in Dvur Kralove Zoo refused meat upto 2 months, and oranges were usually refused while preferred food were bananas, and tomatoes.

If, as it is presumed, the male was courting the female before capture, the season closely corresponds to that reported for captive specimens at Dvur Kralove Zoo by Dobroruka (1978) (mid-February) and at Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa by Acharjyo and Mishra (1980) (late February). However commencement of the breeding season for a species in captivity may be earlier than in the wild.

The flesh of the civet is used in indigenous medicine. 'Netra (a Munda tribal-head working under the project) told me that small pieces of the meat are kept in linseed oil in a closed earthen pot and regularly sunned to finally extract an oil which is used as a cure for

scabies. 'A dried piece of the testis heated with ghee from cow's milk, when cooled can be used as a medicine for a type of lips and tongue disease (in Orissa called: *Áliti ghá*) seen in children less than a year old. The same product also cures skin sores due to contact with the poisonous urine (?) of spiders'.

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The Common Indian Palm Civet is called 'Sáliá Patani.' in Oriya language

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5. BIRTH OF WHITE TIGER (*PANTHERA TIGRIS*) CUBS TO NORMAL COLOURED TIGERS IN CAPTIVITY

(With a text-figure)

The White Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) is a magnificent snow white animal with ash or light black stripes, pink paw pads and ice-blue eyes. All the white tigers so far available in captivity had their origin from a male White Tiger named 'Mohan' captured from the forests of Rewa (Madhya Pradesh) in May, 1951 at an estimated age of about nine months. The present communication deals with the birth of three White Tiger cubs in one litter at the Nandankanan Biological Park, Orissa to a pair of normal coloured tigers with apparently no known history of having any relation with the White Tiger 'Mohan'.

A normal coloured tigress 'Ganga' whose mating with a normal coloured tiger 'Deepak'

was observed from 24-9-79 to 3-10-79 in the Park, gave birth to three White Tiger Cubs (two females and one male) on 8-1-1980. This is the result of a father-daughter mating.

The body colour of the cubs were snow white with light black stripes, pink paw pads and ice-blue eyes. The eyes of the cubs opened on 12th day (one male and one female cubs) and on 11th day (right eye) and 12th day (left eye) in case of the other female cub.

The weight and size of these cubs recorded after about 48 hours on 10-1-1980 were as follows : weight—1.210 Kg (female), 1.240 Kg (female) and 1.385 Kg (male) and measured 50 cm tip to tip including 15 cm long tail